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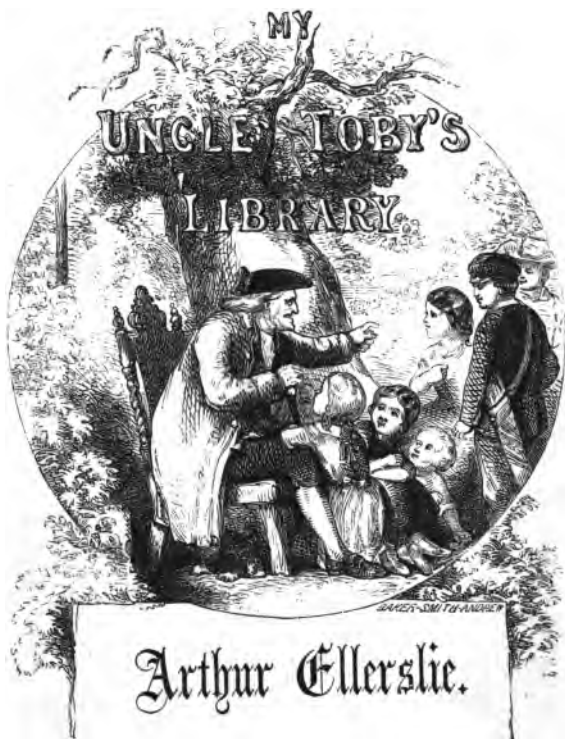
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ARTHUR ELLERSLIE;
OR,
THE BRAVE BOY.

BY
FRANCIS FORRESTER, ESQ. *found.*

Daniel Wine

BOSTON:
GEO. C. RAND, 3 CORNHILL.
WM. J. REYNOLDS & CO.
1853.

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P R E F A C E .

My uncle Toby is an old soldier. In his youth he was in the wars of foreign countries. But he is very old now, and loves peace and children better than war and soldiers. He is a great story teller. He is never happier than when, on a summer's day, he sits under a tree, with his little friends all round him listening to his stories. This library contains some of his prettiest tales.

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Whether the birds, who heard them from their green home over his head, warbled them in the ears of the writer, or whether he heard them himself, is of no consequence at all to the reader. I leave him to guess about that. This I know: whoever reads them will say that my uncle Toby is not to be sneezed at as a poor story teller; but that his stories are capital, and ought to be read by all the boys and girls in the world.

ARTHUR ELLERSLIE.

ON the outskirts of the little village of ROSEDALE stood a small school house. It looked very pleasant and inviting to the eye, for it was newly painted white, with green blinds ; and it had a grove of young oak trees in its rear, and a noble old elm in its front yard. As the village clock struck twelve, its door opened, and a troop of happy children came running out, looking as if they felt

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glad that the hour for a recess had arrived. And I think it is quite likely that they really felt as glad as they looked.

Among them was a boy of about twelve years old, named RALPH RATTLER. He had quite handsome features; plump, rosy cheeks, and large grayish eyes. He was dressed better than any other boy in the group; and it was easy to see, both by his dress and mien, that he belonged to rich parents.

There was another boy among them, named ARTHUR ELLERSLIE, whose cheap, patched clothing clearly showed that he was the child of poverty. But he had as

fine a bearing, and as noble a look, as any boy in that youthful flock. Although it was plain that he was the child of poor parents, it was equally clear that in mind he was at least equal to any of his companions. His broad, pale brow, his soft, bright, blue eyes, his intelligent look, told all who looked upon him that he was a boy of no ordinary stamp.

As the children crowded towards the narrow gateway leading to the road, it happened that Arthur and Ralph were hustled close upon each other. Arthur was a little in front of Ralph, and, yielding to the impulse to be first, which

seemed to animate all the children, he was pressing forward, and was about to step into the street before Master Randolph.

This attempt gave great offence to Ralph, and, looking very fiercely at Arthur, he seized him by the arm, and pulling him sharply round, slipped past him into the road, saying, —

“Get out of the way, you Sam Patch!”

The violence of this act had almost thrown Arthur down. But clinging to a post which stood in the middle of the narrow path, he saved himself from falling. Turning to young Randolph, he said, —

“That was very unkind of you, Ralph. I would n’t have served you so.”

“I guess you would n’t either, you little ragamuffin ! Do you think I’d let such a *poor* thing as you are push *me* ? No ! I’d give you this, if you did ;” and the little would-be gentleman ground his teeth together, and shook his fist in Arthur’s face.

“Hit him a slap, Arthur !” “I wouldn’t stand that, I know !” “Don’t let that little lump of starch crow over you in that way, Arth,” exclaimed the boys, as they came running together, expecting to see a fight.

“He hit me ? No, he’s too much of

a coward for that," replied Ralph with a sneer, as he stood with clinched fists still in front of his victim.

Arthur looked a little paler than usual, and a slight tremor crept over his frame, as he listened to this wicked, insulting language. But his heart was firm, and he nobly conquered his passions, and answered the cries of his playmates and the taunts of his young adversary by saying, —

"I am not a coward! If I was, I should fight with Ralph, for fear of being called a coward by you. I believe it is wrong for boys to fight; and I will not hit Ralph, though he has used me very unkindly indeed."

"Bravo!" cried young FREDDIE FRENCH, who was Arthur's particular friend, and who knew him to be a brave boy.

"Bravo! bravo!" cried the boys, catching Freddie's spirit. "Arthur is right. We know he is a noble fellow;" and, turning to Master Randolph, they said he was mean to serve Arthur as he had done.

Finding the boys were all against him, Ralph muttered something to himself, and, turning round, stalked off amid the hisses of his schoolmates, who stood and watched him, until he had turned a corner and was out of sight. Then one of them, taking off his cap, waved it in the air, and shouted, —

“Three cheers for Arthur Ellerslie!”

“Bravo! Three cheers for Arthur Ellerslie!” cried all the boys.

And then they made the welkin ring with three loud hurrahs. In a few moments afterwards they separated, and Arthur walked homewards alone.

I said that Arthur's parents were poor. They were very poor indeed. His father was an idle man, who loved to drink and to gamble better than he loved work. His mother was a good woman. She toiled hard to keep her children from hunger and nakedness. But, with all her industry, they fared very hard. She was not a strong woman. She was the

daughter of a respectable merchant, who kept a large store in a flourishing village, and in her youth she was not inured to severe labor. When she married EDGAR ELLERSLIE, Arthur's father, he was as promising a young man as the country could produce. He was a physician, with a good growing practice; and when he led his ANNIE to the altar, her prospects were envied by half the girls in the village. But poor Annie was sadly disappointed when her husband took to drinking and gambling. He soon lost his practice, and, at the time of our story, he took very little care of either Annie or his

three boys. Their home was in a wretched hovel, and poor Mrs. Ellerslie was wearing away her life with labor and sorrow. Her father and mother were dead. Her only brother was in the distant west. And she had to suffer all unaided and alone. Poor Annie Ellerslie!

To this comfortless home young Arthur directed his steps, after the affair just now described. Upon entering the only room in the house, except a wretched loft above, he found his mother very busy at the washing tub. His two brothers were in bed, although it was noon. He looked on the scene with a



sad heart. He knew that his brothers were in bed, waiting while his mother washed and dried their clothes, because they had nothing to wear while it was being done. On the rude mantel shelf he saw a mug and a dirty pipe, which reminded him of his idle father. He was sick at heart before entering his home. The reproaches of the proud, quarrelsome Ralph had sunk into his heart. And now the sight of his poor hard-working mother, and of his unclad brothers, waiting in bed for their clothes, added to his grief. He could not restrain his feelings, but, throwing himself upon the floor, he leaned his

aching head against the bedclothes and wept.

He had entered the room so quietly that his mother, being very busy over her wash tub, had not seen him. But when he sat so sorrowfully on the floor, and began to cry and sob violently, she saw him, and said, —

“ Arthur, what is the matter ? ”

Arthur's heart was too full to allow him to speak, so he only wept the more freely in answer to his mother's inquiry.

Seeing him so affected, his good mother dried her hands and arms. Leaving her washing, she picked up a rough cricket which lay on the floor, for

they had no chairs there, and placing it near her boy, she sat down. Then, taking Arthur's hand, she said, with tones of sweet affection that went to his heart, —

“ Arthur, my boy, what ails you ? ”

Still poor Arthur could not speak. His little heart was full of bitter anguish ; and he only sobbed more deeply at this token of his mother's tenderness.

Mrs. Ellerslie was moved and perplexed at this violent outburst. What could it mean ? Could any thing have happened to her noble boy ? were her heart's inquiries, as she gently drew her son towards her and said, —

“Come here, Arthur. Stand by my side, and tell me what has happened.”

The weeping boy arose. Throwing an arm round her neck, and leaning his head upon her breast, he gave free vent to his feelings in a copious shower of tears.

This relieved him. He soon found words to relate what had occurred at the school-yard gate, and then he said, —

“Mother, I could bear all this, but when I come home and see every thing so wretched, and you working so hard, I can’t bear it. It breaks my heart.”

The mother pressed her boy to her heart. A bitter sigh escaped her, as

she thought of the contrast between the son and his once kind and manly father. Hiding her own emotions, however, she replied, —

“You must calm your feelings, my son. We shall have better times by and by. You and your brothers help me a great deal now. As you grow older, you will be able to do much more. We shall all be happy then.”

“I know it, mother. But, O, I am afraid you will get sick and die before that time. Then all our happiness will be gone.” And the tears again flowed down the boy's face, as he gazed at the worn and faded beauty of his once healthy and handsome mother.

"No! God will spare me, my dear boy, I feel that he will, and we shall yet see happier days. Only do as you did to-day, and I can bear all my toils. The thought that I have so brave a son gives me strength."

Arthur felt gratified at his mother's words, and he showed it by giving her an affectionate kiss. He then asked, —

"Do you really think that I did right, mother, in refusing to fight Ralph Rattler? Won't the boys think, in their hearts, that I am a coward?"

"Never mind what they think. True courage lies in always doing what is right, especially when others expect us

to do differently. It requires a braver heart to conquer one's self than it does to capture a city or to win a great battle. And this morning you conquered yourself."

"That I did, mother. Something in my heart whispered, 'Strike him !' But I thought, 'No ! mother says it's wicked to fight, and I won't do it.' And then, mother, I felt calm."

"My dear boy, I would rather see you with strength to rule your passions, than to see you as mighty as HERCULES, of whom you read to me the other night in your history."

"But I thought you told me that the

stories of Hercules were all fables," replied Arthur, his mind being diverted from his troubles by this mention of a subject in which he felt a deep interest.

"True, my son, yet when we speak of great strength and mighty deeds, after reading such stories, it comes easy to say 'Strong as Hercules.'"

"So it does, mother. And if I can't do such things as Hercules is said to have done, I hope, as you told me, to do greater ones."

"That's right, my dear boy. I think you have done a greater deed to-day than your admired Hercules is fabled to have done, when he, in his infancy,

killed the great snakes which the cruel Juno sent to destroy him. Haven't you a picture of that scene in your book, which Freddie French gave you last New Year's day?"

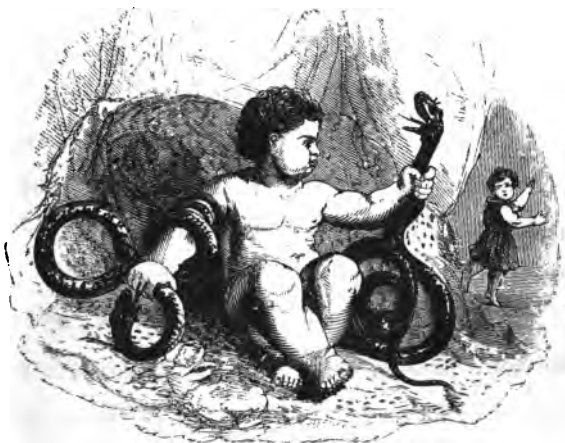
"Yes, mother."

"Well, bring it to me."

Arthur ran to a corner and opened a little box, which he had made with his own hands. Taking out the book, he carried it to his mother. She turned to the picture of Hercules. Pointing to it she said, —

"You see this young hero has a snake in each hand which he is crushing to death."

“Yes, mother, I see him ; and he don’t seem to make much of it, either.”



“Now, my son, let these serpents represent *pride* and *passion*, which you

overcame this morning, and *you* shall be my Hercules."

With this remark, which very much pleased Arthur, Mrs. Ellerslie bade him return the book to its little box in the corner. He obeyed her, and then she said, —

"Now, my son, go to the well and draw a pail of good fresh water. We will have our dinner."

So, while Arthur was getting the water, she went to the cupboard and took out a few cracked plates, some cold johnny cake, and this, with the cold water, a little salt, and a few potatoes, which had been baking in the ashes, formed their frugal dinner.

Arthur's heart felt a little lighter as he left his home on his way back to school. But there was a thought in his head which kept buzzing about his brain like a bee in a bottle. He was thinking of some plan by which he could earn money to relieve his mother from her heavy burdens. A great many schemes sprung up before him, but as they all made it necessary for him to quit school, and as he knew his mother would not allow him to do that, he had to set them aside and try to think of something else.

At last he thought of what some Englishmen had said in his hearing a

few days before. They were talking about what they loved to eat. One of them spoke about watercresses, and wished he could get them, they were so healthy and so nice. Another of the party had said that there were plenty of watercresses at Redbrook, and wished somebody would make a business of gathering them, and would bring them to the village to sell.

Now, Redbrook was about two miles from Arthur's home. He thought he might rise at four o'clock, walk to the brook, gather the cresses, sell them, and get to school by nine o'clock. "At any rate," said he, as he

struck one hand against the other,
“I’ll try.”

That was a fine resolution. It is by trying that every hard task is done, both by men and children. If the miner, who digs down far into the earth, did not “try,” we should have no silver, or tin, or coal. But he “*tries*” with his pickaxe, digging little by little, in the dark passages of the mine, and so we get



the coal to burn and the metals to use ; and as our little friend Arthur resolved to try, you will not have much doubt of his success.

Arthur was just rousing from his thinkings about the cresses, when he heard a startling cry as of children in a great fright. It made his heart knock against his ribs for a moment. He looked and listened. The screams drew nearer, and he soon saw several boys running along a field, which contained what was called "the hollow." It was a deep dell, in the middle of which was a small but deep pond. From the edge of this dell the cries proceeded, and the

boys, catching sight of Arthur, ran towards him with uplifted arms and pale faces, crying as they ran, —

“O, she will be drowned! she will be drowned!”

Arthur sprang to meet them and asked, —

“Who will be drowned?”

“Little Minnie Brown is in the pond!” cried they, in a breath.

Now Minnie Brown was the favorite of almost all the children in the village, and no one liked her better than Arthur. The tidings of her danger gave him wings. He flew along the field, leaped down the sides of the dell, and reached

the edge of the pond just as Minnie's clothes, which had hitherto kept her from sinking, had become wet and heavy, and just as she went under water.

Arthur was always considered the best swimmer among the village boys. He could dive, and float, and swim, almost like a fish. So, throwing aside his cap and his well-patched jacket, in he plunged after Minnie. For a few moments he remained under water. Then he came up, with poor little unconscious Minnie on his arm. It was too much for his strength, but he bravely struck out for the shore. He had not

swam far before some men, who had been alarmed at the cry of the children, reached the pond, and helped him bring his lovely burden to the land.

• Minnie was taken directly home, where she was soon restored to consciousness. Most of the children had followed her dripping body, and stood gazing anxiously in at the door of her house. But a few of the boys remained in the dell. These gathered round Arthur and praised him for his courage. But he, shaking the wet from his clothes, picked up his coat and cap, and hurried home to tell his mother what he had done. As he walked away, the joy of

having saved Minnie's life filled his bosom. He forgot how poor he was, and his step was as firm as that of a prince.

After he had left the group of admiring boys, who kept gazing upon him as long as he was in sight, FREDDIE FRENCH turned to Ralph Rattler and asked him, —

“Who is the coward now?”

“Yes,” said WILLIE WESTON, “you called him a coward this morning, Mr. Ralph, and tried to make us think you were very brave. Why didn't *you* swim in after Minnie?”

“He was afraid,” cried one of the boys.

"He pushed her into the pond, too," said another, "I saw him do it."

"Say that again, and I'll give you something," replied Ralph, coloring deeply, and putting himself into a fighting attitude.

"No you won't!" "No you won't!" cried a half dozen voices, "we won't let you crow over any of us any more. We know you are a coward now, and we are not afraid of you."

Just then, the school bell rung. The boys scampered away up the sides of the dell and into school. Ralph walked slowly after them, wearing a countenance which looked dark and lowery. It was easy to see he was not happy.

The truth was, he felt both guilty and ashamed. As one of the boys had said, it was he who had pushed little Minnie Brown into the pond. True, he did not mean to do it. But he had done it. It seems that the shore of this pond was very shallow for a few feet. The water was not ankle deep. But a little way in there was a shelving bank, where, if one stepped off, he found the water four or five feet deep, and it grew deeper the farther he advanced. In fine weather the children were used to pull off their shoes and wade in where it was shallow. As they did so, Master Rattler was very fond of putting the small children into

a fright, by pushing them towards the deep water. He had often done this with Minnie. But he went too far with his mischief that day, for the frightened child, in trying to escape from him, stepped on the edge of the shelving bank, lost her foothold, and fell, shrieking, into the deep water.

Ralph was a fair swimmer, but he was really a very timid boy. Being quite large of his age, the son of a rich father, and having a very violent temper, he had learned to bluster among his schoolmates until they were all afraid of him. But when Minnie was struggling in the pond he lost all his bold-

ness. Instead of plunging in to save her, as Arthur did, he stood pale, and trembling all over like a leaf in a storm of wind. He thus showed that he was really without the courage of which he boasted.

And, now that his companions were out of sight, he felt afraid to go to school lest the master should find out what he had done. He was a very sly boy, and thought that by keeping out of the way he might not be seriously charged with pushing Minnie into the pond. The boy who saw him do it would be afraid to persist in charging him with doing it, if he denied it firmly; and as for Minnie,

she was so frightened she could not tell who it was; at least, he could make his parents believe that she was mistaken.

All this was very wicked, but it shows how a selfish mind will act when it gets into difficulty. Boys who do not strive to do *right*, but to please themselves, will always be growing worse and worse. Sinning is like walking in a deep quagmire. Every step you take sinks you the deeper in the fatal mire until you perish.

Having made up his mind to keep out of sight, he turned off from the route to school and hurried towards his home. Passing up the main street he came to

a fine mansion. On the door was a large silvered plate, with RATTLER written upon it in large and beautiful letters. This was his father's house. He rung the bell. A servant admitted him. He entered the parlor with his hand upon his forehead, and throwing himself upon a sofa, leaned his head upon a cushion.

His mother, a stately-looking lady, was in the room. Seeing her son come in and act in such a way, she said to him, —

“Ralph, what is the matter?”

“My head aches,” returned he, gruffly, for he was not the most amiable of boys, even at home.

"Does it ache very badly?"

"To be sure it does, or I shouldn't be here," was his insolent answer.

"Well, Ralph, you needn't speak so cross to your mother, if you are sick."

"I ain't sick."

"But you just said your head ached."

"Well, that ain't being sick, is it? I shall be well enough presently; so don't tease me."

"You are a strange child, Ralph," replied his mother, with a sigh.

If she had called him a spoiled boy, she would have told the truth. Had she punished him for his insolence, she would have done him justice. But

Mrs. Rattler had always let him have his own way, and he already treated her with scorn.

In a few minutes he got up from the sofa, and hurried up stairs to his own room. There he laughed outright at the manner in which he had acted towards his mother. Then, remembering that he had to prepare a declamation for the next school examination, and being very proud of himself as the best speaker in the school, he took up his book to commit it to memory. Pacing the floor with his book in one hand, he spent the remainder of the afternoon reciting his piece.

There we will leave him for the present, while we follow Arthur Ellerslie to his home.



As he entered the house, his mother was about to return to her washing. She had wiped the few dishes used in eating her frugal dinner, and having prayed a few moments, as usual, she had resumed her place at the wash tub. As Arthur opened the door, she looked up, surprised to see him in such a plight. His wet hair hung in straight locks down

over his face, his shirt stuck close to his body, and his well-mended pants clung to his legs almost as closely as bark to a tree. She gazed at him with wonder in her looks, and asked, —

“Arthur, my boy, where *have* you been?”

“I’ve been in the pond, mother.”

“But what made you go in with your clothes on, Arthur?”

Arthur then told his mother in a few words all about Minnie Brown, and how he had saved her life. His mother listened to his story with great interest. When he had finished it, she kissed his wet cheeks, and said, —

“Nobly done, my brave boy. You have shown that you have *natural* courage to face danger in a good 'cause, as well as *moral* courage to refuse to do wrong because another wrongs you. You are my Hercules indeed.”

Arthur had but one suit of clothes in the world; so he was obliged to go to bed while his poor mother rinsed and dried what he had on. It was, however, a beautiful sunshiny afternoon, with a fine western breeze blowing; so that, in a couple of hours, Arthur was up and dressed again, as if nothing had happened. But during those two hours he had thought much of good little

Minnie Brown, whose life he had saved, and of the water cresses he was to gather at Redbrook, for the purpose of helping his mother.

Meanwhile there had been quite an excitement in the village school. The story of Minnie's narrow escape from drowning had reached the ears of MR. WATSON, the teacher; and he felt quite anxious to find out all the particulars, and to know the *facts* in the case.

This Mr. Watson was a tall, thin man, about forty years of age. His hair was already of a grayish color, and it lay in thin locks on his head. His face also bore a few wrinkles, the tokens of early

sorrows and of severe trials in his previous life. He had little twinkling eyes, surmounted by large brows, and shaded by long lashes. His features were sharp, his voice was somewhat harsh, and his manner slightly imperious; though his disposition was generally kind, notwithstanding his temper was naturally quick and irritable.

He had one very bad habit—he was a great lover of snuff. Some mistaken friend had once presented him with a silver snuffbox, long and narrow, which held just half an ounce of his favorite “black, scented rappee.” This box he

carried in his vest pocket. It was filled anew every morning, and he snuffed up its contents daily. It was a filthy practice, and there was scarcely a desk in the school which did not get more or less sprinkled with the dirty stuff every day.

As soon as the school was fairly assembled this afternoon, Mr. Watson, after fidgeting about on his elevated seat for a few minutes, rose up in a very stately manner, and threw searching glances all round the school house. The scholars felt the meaning of those looks, and they sat silent and almost breathless in their places. The master then

drew out his silver box, tapped it once or twice on the top, slowly raised the cover, and then, plunging his finger and thumb into the exciting dust, took out a formidable pinch, which he solemnly applied to his expectant nostrils. An application of the handkerchief followed, and he was ready to proceed with his duties. But instead of calling up a class to recite, he asked, in a very emphatic voice, —

“Where is Minnie Brown?”

No one replied, for all felt that an inquiry into the matter of Minnie's misfortune was about to commence; which being a serious affair, they

shrunk from it, lest any of them should get into trouble. After the pause had continued a few moments, Mr. Watson spoke again, in a still more commanding tone of voice, —

“Can no one tell why Miss Brown is absent?”

“She fell into the pond, sir, and was almost drowned,” replied a boy, in a voice scarcely audible.

Mr. Watson knew thus much before. He wished to know more. Hence he inquired again, —

“How came she to fall into the pond? Does any one know?”

“She was playing there, sir, and fell in.” answered the same voice.

"What kind of game was being played, that could carry her so far into the pond as to fall into deep water?"

"She was wading round the shore with the other girls, sir, when some of the boys tried to frighten them, by pretending to drive them into the deep water. Minnie, in running away from the boys, grew frightened, ran in too far, and fell over the ledge," said Freddie French.

"Who brought her out?"

"Arthur Ellerslie, sir," responded a dozen voices, all seeming eager to do honor to Arthur for his courage.

"Then Arthur Ellerslie saved Minnie's life, by risking his own?"

"Yes, sir," replied a chorus of voices.

"Brave boy! He will make a great man yet," exclaimed Mr. Watson, with whom, by the way, Arthur was a particular favorite. Then he added, —

"Was Arthur engaged in pushing the girls into the pond?"

"No, sir."

"I thought not. But who was?"

A pause succeeded. The boys and girls were very reluctant to implicate him whom they knew to be guilty. The master saw their hesitation, and understood its motive. He therefore spoke again, and said, —

"Children, I respect your unwilling-

ness to tell of the fault of a fellow-scholar. You do not wish to be talebearers. That is well in all trivial cases. But here is a serious fact. A little girl has nearly lost her life by a practice I have often forbidden, and which must be stopped. It is, therefore, proper for you to tell all you know about it. Now, if you do know who pushed Minnie into the pond, I desire you to tell me."

Freddie French, Arthur's friend, now stood up and boldly said, —

"It was Ralph Rattler, sir."

"Ralph Rattler!" exclaimed Mr. Watson; "how do you know it was he?"

"We saw him do it," replied Freddie, firmly.

"Who saw him?"

Upon this, several boys replied, "I did, sir;" and "I did, sir," "I did, sir," came from at least a dozen voices.

The teacher proceeded with his inquiries until he drew out all the facts in the case, and was satisfied that Ralph Rattler was the guilty boy who had pushed little Minnie over the ledge. Then calling Freddie French to him, he said, —

"Freddie, go to Minnie Brown's home and inquire how she is."

"Yes, sir," replied the boy; and he

turned towards the door, slipped into the street, and tripped swiftly towards Minnie's residence.

The business of the school now went on as usual, though the boys observed that their teacher was more than usually absent minded. He was thinking of the best way to treat the offending Ralph. The scholars, too, were not as studious, though more quiet than usual. Their frequent glances towards the door showed their thoughts to be more upon Minnie than upon their lessons.

Freddie was not long on his errand of kindness. Soon the school door opened, and his pleasant face, flushed with the

excitement of his run and covered with smiles, told that his tidings were good. The teacher was as impatient to hear them as the scholars; so, before the boy had well closed the school-house door, he asked, —

“ Well, French, how is Minnie ? ”

“ Nicely, sir. She is out of all danger.”

“ Did you see her ? ”

“ Yes, sir ; her mother let me peep at her a moment. She was fast asleep in bed, but her face looked very pale.”

“ Poor Minnie ! ” exclaimed the teacher ; and then, observing how the scholars were showing their gladness by whisper-

ings and dumb shows, he rung the bell and said, —

“Now let the school come to order.”

Presently the hour for recess arrived. Instead of spending it in the usual way, some of the children ran over to inquire about Minnie, and one or two boys hurried to the hovel where Arthur lived, to see how he was getting along. The rest of them collected in groups beneath the trees which surrounded the school house, to talk of how Ralph Rattler would “catch it,” and how nobly young Ellerslie had acted in saving Minnie’s life.

The ringing of the bell soon called

them back to their studies. But to their very great surprise, just as they reached their places, in walked Ralph Rattler. He held his head up quite haughtily as he entered the room, and walked with a swaggering air to his seat. His looks wore a sort of "*I don't care*" expression. But it was easy for the master to see that his heart was not half as bold as his looks. He appeared to have come to school for the purpose of covering his fault, and of preventing inquiry into his conduct at the pond.

The fact agreed with the appearance. After the interview with his mother, as he sat in his chamber with a miserable

heart, it struck him that his absence might create suspicion ; so he had made up his mind to go in at the close of the afternoon recess.

As soon as order was obtained in the school, Mr. Watson said, —

“ Rattler ! ”

“ Sir ! ” replied Ralph, with well affected respect.

“ Why were you not at school earlier this afternoon ? ”

“ My mamma wanted me, sir.”

“ Your mamma wanted you, indeed ! ” replied the teacher, suspecting that Ralph had uttered a lie, as indeed he had. “ But how came you, in that case,

to be playing at the pond, just before school time?"

Ralph colored slightly; but, being as quick witted as he was wicked, he answered, —

"She gave me permission to play until school time, and told me to return home at two o'clock."

"Well, Rattler, what did she want you to do?"

This was a poser, for it was well known to all the school that it was seldom Ralph was asked to do any thing for his mother at all. So, after a slight hesitation, he replied, in a thick, gruff voice, —

"She wanted me to go on an errand."

Here was another lie. Unhappy Ralph! he was fast getting into increasing difficulty, adding sin to sin, to his own guilt and sorrow. But this is the way with all evil doers. Every first step in wrong doing is followed by others still more wicked and hurtful.

The teacher continued to question Ralph, until he told so many lies that he became confused, and was silent. Satisfied that he was guilty, and being himself the witness of his repeated falsehoods, the teacher said to him, —

“Ralph, you must confess to-day’s errors, or be expelled. You may retire until to-morrow morning.”

That evening the teacher had a long conversation with Ralph's father, the result of which was the determination of that gentleman to send his son to an academy in a neighboring town.

The villagers were glad to be rid of so bad a boy: while Arthur met with smiles and kind words from every body for his bravery and goodness. As for Minnie Brown and her parents, they could not say enough in his favor. And poor as he was, Arthur's heart was really happy. He had done a noble deed; his mother loved him; and he trusted in the Savior's love. Why, then, should he not be happy?

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